

Gwendolen. *[Satirically.]* I am glad to say that I have never seen a spade. It is obvious that our social spheres have been widely different.

*'Enter Merriman, followed by the footman. He carries a salver; table cloth, and plate stand. Cecily is about to retort. The presence of the servants exercises a restraining influence, under which both girls chafe.'*

Merriman. Shall I lay tea here as usual, Miss?

Cecily. *[Sternly, in a calm voice.]* Yes, as usual.  
*[Merriman begins to clear table and lay cloth. A long pause.]*

*Cecily and Gwendolen glare at each other.*  
Gwendolen. Are there many interesting walks in the vicinity?

Miss Cardew?  
Cecily. Oh I yes I a great many. From the top of one of the

hills quite close one can see five counties.  
Gwendolen. Five counties! I don't think I should like that;

I hate crowds.  
Cecily. *[Sweetly.]* I suppose that is why you live in town?

*[Gwendolen bites her lip, and beats her foot nervously with her parasol.]*

Gwendolen. *[Looking round]* Quite a well-kept garden this is, Miss Cardew.

Cecily. So glad you like it, Miss Fairfax.

Gwendolen. I had no idea there were any flowers in the country.

Cecily. Oh, flowers are as common here, Miss Fairfax, as people are in London.

Gwendolen. Personally I cannot understand how anybody manages to exist in the country, if anybody who is anybody does.

The country always bores me to death.  
Cecily. Ah! That is what the newspapers call agricultural depression, is it not? I believe the aristocracy are suffering very much from it just at present. It is almost an epidemic amongst them, I have been told. May I offer you some tea, Miss Fairfax?

Gwendolen. *[With elaborate politeness]* Thank you. *[Aside]*

Detestable girl! But I require tea!

Cecily. *[Sweetly]* Sugar?

Gwendolen. *[Superciliously]* No, thank you. Sugar is not fashionable any more.

*[Cecily looks angrily at her, takes up the tongs and puts four lumps of sugar into the cup.]*

Cecily. *[Severely]* Cake or bread and butter?